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Thursday, Oct. 12, 2017



TODAY'S EDITORIAL CARTOON

'Fuel for Thought,' Options for Puerto Rican Energy Relief



Thursday, Oct. 12, 2017 -- A roundup of opinion, commentary and analysis on the taxpayer subsidies behind Amazon's business, a legislative uproar over the Cardinal Health salary controversy, a call to reconsider the purpose of a natural gas pipeline project and more.

POLITICS & POLICY

RICK SMITH: As Amazon looks to build \$5B HQ it already reaps \$1.2B in tax subsidies, incentives (*WRAL-TV/TechWire*) -- Triangle and North Carolina government as well as private sector executives are preparing to submit what is likely to be a tax incentive-laden proposal to Amazon in hopes of securing its mammoth \$5 billion, 50,000 job HQ2 project. But analysis by the *The Business Journals*, including the *Triangle Business Journal*, finds that the ecommerce giant is already benefiting from more than \$1.2 billion in incentives and subsidies for other projects.

LAUREN OHNESORGE: No N.C. layoffs reported to state in Sept. – first time in 7 years (*Triangle Business Journal* analysis) -- For the first time since August 2010, the state of North Carolina went an entire month without layoff notifications.

GARY ROBERTSON: Top leader at N.C. Lottery retiring (*AP* analysis) -- The N.C. Education Lottery's top leader is retiring next spring, ending a stint with the agency that began before it started selling tickets more than a decade ago. Alice Garland will step down as executive director at the end of March. She became the lottery's second executive director in late 2010, succeeding Tom Shaheen. During her tenure, annual ticket sales increased by \$1 billion to \$2.4 billion in the past fiscal year, while the share earmarked for public education

Election presents upset possibilities (*Greensboro News & Record*) -- Greensboro primary voters generally favored incumbents Tuesday but gave a hint that they might elect a couple of newcomers in November.

HEALTH

TAYLOR KNOPF: State Lawmakers Rail Against Spending Excesses at Mental Health Agency (*N.C. Health News*) -- Members of the General Assembly expressed outrage after learning more details about the NC DHHS' investigation into Cardinal Innovations.

Trump has a new plan to kill Obamacare, and it could work (*Charlotte Observer*) -- President Trump plans to order agencies to gut Affordable Care Act with loosening of key rules on policies that cover millions.

AMY GOLDSTEIN: Trump to sign executive order to gut ACA insurance rules and undermine marketplaces (*Washington Post analysis*) -- The order would allow individuals and small businesses to buy health insurance that skirts state regulations and Affordable Care Act protections. Critics predict such plans will drive up costs for consumers with serious medical conditions and prompt more insurers to flee the law's marketplaces.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Pipeline's progress (*Fayetteville Observer*) -- Until now, the drive to build a natural gas pipeline from West Virginia to North Carolina was speeding along like freight train on empty tracks. There have been plenty of efforts to halt the 600-mile, \$5 billion project, but the opinions that count — federal and state regulators who give the green lights — have all been in the pipeline's favor.

SAM PERKINS: Your drinking water could be threatened by chicken poop (*Charlotte Observer column*) -- Poultry plants near the Catawba River threaten it with waste from thousands of chickens.

REP. MARK WALKER: Congress Should Help Hurricane Victims—but Pay for It, Too (*Wall Street Journal column*) -- Governing by crisis is irresponsible, especially considering the \$20 trillion national debt.

JOHN DOWNEY: Coal ash, abandoned nuclear plant will dominate busy slate of N.C. regulatory hearings (*Charlotte Business Journal analysis*) -- N.C. Utilities Commission Chairman Ed Finley sees busy months ahead highlighted by hot button issues of coal-ash costs and Duke Energy's abandoned Lee Nuclear Station.

WILL MICHAELS: Peat Soil, The Great Dismal Swamp, And An Attempt To Slow Climate Change (*WUNC-FM analysis*) -- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is trying to reverse more than two centuries of damage to sensitive peat soil in the Great Dismal Swamp.

STEPHANIE CARSON: At What Cost? NC Forests Fueling Clean Air in Europe (*Public News Service analysis*) -- North Carolina's hardwood forests are becoming a high demand commodity for a growing energy industry. Parts of Europe are transitioning to the use of wood pellets for power generation and the heating of their homes and businesses. It's part of their effort to meet

JEFF LEWIS: October Offers Birding Opportunities, Festival (*Coastal Review column*) -- October brings many migratory birds to the Outer Banks, just in time for the main session of the popular Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival,

EDUCATION

JUSTIN PARMENTER: What happened when I stopped viewing my students as data points (*Washington Post column*) -- Recently I was on a panel at a meeting of the N.C. Public School Forum's Beginning Teacher Leadership Network — a group that aspires to "retain, support, and accelerate the development of beginning teachers." I was asked what advice I would give myself if I was beginning my first year all over again. It led me to think about how we define success in education and the implications of those definitions for both students and teachers.

Group tied to rich donor who backed NC school takeover law now wants to run those schools (*Durham Herald-Sun analysis*) -- A company tied to a wealthy Libertarian donor who helped pass a state law allowing takeover of low-performing North Carolina schools is trying to win approval to operate those schools. Achievement For All Children was among the groups that applied for state approval to run struggling schools that will be chosen for the Innovative School District. Achievement For All Children is heavily connected to Oregon resident John Bryan, who is a generous contributor to political campaigns and school-choice causes in North Carolina.

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